

FindLaw
2440 W. El Camino Real, 3rd Floor
Mountain View, CA 94040
Telephone: 651.687.7082
<http://www.findlaw.com>

News Release

Media Contacts:

Kyle Christensen
FindLaw
651.687.7082
kyle.christensen@thomson.com

For Immediate Release

Are You Reading the Fine Print? FindLaw Survey Says Americans Pay Attention Before Signing Contracts

MOUNTAIN VIEW, Calif., August 14, 2003 — Americans pay close attention before signing on the dotted line, says a new survey by FindLaw, the leading legal Web site.

How much attention do we pay? According to the FindLaw survey, the percentage of Americans who say they read every word or at least enough to understand contracts before signing on the dotted line is:

85%	Buying or selling a home
82%	Employment contracts
77%	Credit card agreements
70%	Housing rental agreements
67%	Sports and recreation liability waivers
63%	Rental car agreements

“It really pays to make sure you understand everything before you sign,” says Professor Rick Lord, who teaches contract law at Campbell University School of Law in North Carolina. “Many times, for example in mortgage agreements or employment contracts, you can negotiate better terms, such as avoiding prepayment penalties or getting better perks.”

On the other hand, failing to read a contract can be costly in terms of penalties, liabilities or inability to recover damages. Less than one quarter of people said that they only glance at the wording or completely ignore these contracts before signing them. People were mostly likely to not pay attention to sports and recreation liability waivers (18 percent), rental car agreements (16 percent) and credit card agreements (15 percent).

“If you fail to read a contract thoroughly, you do so at your own hazard,” says Lord. “Generally, if you sign a contract, you’re bound by it whether you read it completely or not. People should read every agreement thoroughly before they sign it.”

Additional information on contract law and how to find an attorney in your area to help draft or review contracts can be found on helpful Web sites such as www.findlaw.com.

###

NOTE TO EDITORS: The national survey used a representative sample of 1,000 adults nationwide, with a margin of error of plus or minus three percentage points, and was conducted by Ipsos Public Affairs.

About FindLaw

FindLaw (www.findlaw.com) is the leading provider of online legal information and solutions for the legal community, businesses and individuals. The FindLaw Internet portal is the highest-trafficked legal Web site, according to leading independent Internet-traffic-monitoring services. The site provides comprehensive, plain-English legal information to businesses and individuals. These resources include West Legal Directory®, the Internet's largest directory of lawyers and legal professionals. FindLaw also offers comprehensive information, resources and services for law practice and legal career development, including free case law, an online career center, breaking legal news, newsletters, message boards, service directories, continuing legal education and legal search tools. In addition, FindLaw provides access to tools and services that help connect legal professionals with potential clients. FindLaw is a division of West, a Thomson business (TSX: TOC; NYSE:TOC) and the foremost provider of integrated information solutions to the U.S. legal market.

About West

Headquartered in Eagan, Minn., West is the foremost provider of integrated information solutions to the U.S. legal market. West is a business within [The Thomson Corporation](http://www.thomson.com) (TSX: TOC; NYSE: TOC) and was formed when West Publishing and Thomson Legal Publishing merged in June 1996. For more information, please visit the West Web site at www.westgroup.com.

About The Thomson Corporation

The Thomson Corporation, with 2002 revenues of \$7.8 billion, is a global leader in providing integrated information solutions to business and professional customers. Thomson provides value-added information, software tools and applications to more than 20 million users in the fields of law, tax, accounting, financial services, higher education, reference information, corporate training and assessment, scientific research and healthcare. The Corporation's common shares are listed on the Toronto and New York stock exchanges (TSX: TOC; NYSE: TOC).